



# What do wild salmon mean to me?

**Jo Girvan**



Originally a behavioural ecologist, I made the switch to freshwater ecology when I used fish as subjects during my PhD. Since then, I have worked in the academic, public and commercial sectors in Ireland and Scotland, eventually landing at the Forth Rivers Trust in Edinburgh where I remain nearly ten years later.

To me, salmon are a practical, emotional and political issue. Previously abundant and now elusive, even in Scotland, the Atlantic salmon is a reminder of the extent to which we are destroying our environment. To try and protect and restore their inland habitats, even in some small way, seems to me to be a worthwhile way to spend a working life. Any politician wanting my vote would need to have a care for our freshwaters and their apex inhabitants. Rightly or not, a decent stance on the environment would cause me to offer my trust on other issues as well.

The salmon presents a dichotomy of conflicting emotions. On the one hand, the seeming impossibility of restoring them to their previous glory drains optimism and instils a sense of hopelessness. On the other hand, the idea that there is something fast, dark and very cold hidden in plain sight in a stony landscape, is heartening. They are the perfect evolutionary specimen, often beyond

our reach and inhabiting places where not many others can survive. As a non-angler, I don't go looking for the adult stage and they remain a bit of a mystery to me. I can't see them, and I don't want to. It is enough just to know they are there.



Discover more about the importance of wild Atlantic salmon at:  
[www.fms.scot/what-do-wild-salmon-mean-to-me/](http://www.fms.scot/what-do-wild-salmon-mean-to-me/)  
**#wildsalmonmatter**

